

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 4-15, 17, 19 and 20 are pending in this application, Claims 8, 9, 11-14, 19 and 20 are amended and Claims 1-3, 16 and 18 are cancelled by the present Amendment, Claims 4-7 and 10 having previously been withdrawn as directed to a non-elected invention.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Smith et al (U.S. Pat. No. 5,311,095, herein "Smith") in view of Tezuka (U.S. Pat. No. 6,308,389) alone or in further view of Finsterwald et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,423,220, herein "Finsterwald"). Claims 2, 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Smith, Tezuka alone or in further view of Finsterwald, in further view of Barthe (U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,159) or Applicants' Admitted Prior Art (herein "AAPA"); Claims 3 and 16-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Smith, Tezuka alone or in further view of Finsterwald, in further view of Barthe and in further view of Ries et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,605,154, herein "Ries") and Claims 8, 9, 11, 14 and 15 were indicated as allowable.

Initially, applicant and applicant's representative wish to thank Examiner Jaworski for the interview granted applicant's representative on February 15, 2007. During that interview the outstanding rejections were discussed in detail. The following sets forth Applicants response to the issues discussed in the interview.

Further, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of the allowable subject matter in Claims 8, 9, 11, 14 and 15.

Accordingly, Applicants have cancelled Claims 1-3, 16 and 18 and have amended Claims 12 and 13 to incorporate the allowable features found within Claim 8.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 12 and 13 and Claim 17 depending therefrom also patentably distinguish over the cited Smith, Tezuka, Finsterwald, Barthe and Ries references.

In addition, Applicants respectfully traverse the §103(a) rejection of Claim 19 and 20 as unpatentable over Smith in view of Tezuka alone or in further combination with Finsterwald.

Claim 19 recites, in part,

a plurality of single-crystal piezoelectric members,
a plurality of lower resin layers which are formed on lower surfaces of the piezoelectric members and which have smaller acoustic impedance than the piezoelectric members, a cutting characteristic and electrical conductivity so as to function as electrodes, the lower surfaces being an opposite side of an acoustically emitting side; and
a plurality of wires which are arranged on the lower resin layers, extend along an entire length of each of the piezoelectric members and are connected to the lower resin layers along the longitudinal direction of each of the piezoelectric members.

Claim 20 recites similar features.

As discussed in the interview, none of the cited Smith, Tezuka or Finsterwald references describe a plurality of wires which are arranged on the lower resin layers, extend along an entire length of each of the piezoelectric members and are connected to the lower resin layers along the longitudinal direction of each of the piezoelectric members.

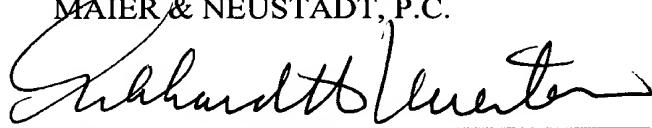
In other words, none of these cited references describe wires that are arranged on lower resin layers of the ultrasonic probe and extend along an entire length of each of the piezoelectric members in the ultrasonic probe. For instance, Figures 6 and 7 of the present specification illustrate an example of the plurality of wires. This feature is not described in Smith, Tezuka or Finsterwald or any other of the cited references.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 19 and 20 also patentably distinguish over the cited Smith, Tezuka, Finsterwald, Barthe and Ries references considered alone or in combination.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above comments, the pending claims are believed to be patentably distinguishing over the cited prior art and in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eckhard H. Kuesters', written over a horizontal line.

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